

Kalimpong

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Himalayan Times



RIGHTS OF THE RONGS



**Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom
Proverbs 1:7**

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MISSIONARIES IN THE HILLS



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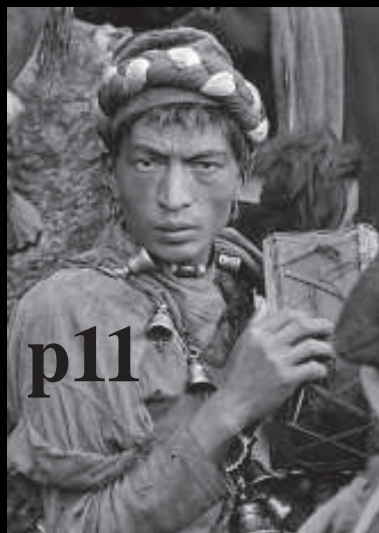
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PAINTING THE TOWN RED

As a young man seeking his fortune,
Mr. Sherpa was blessed very early and
he acquired his first job as a Co
operative Inspector in 1993,
therefrom began his journey.. writes
Prakriti Prabha Chettri

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JHAHKRY IN DARJEELING

Who are the Jhahkries? Are they
born or made? Can we call the
knowledge of Jhahkry as
Jhahkrism? How does a person
become a Jhahkry?

Asks Eagam Khaling

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Sandip C. Jain



RIGHTS OF THE RONGS

The Rongs have been wronged down the ages but the current Trinamul Government have wronged the entire Hill community with its ill thought and ill timed tactic of Divide & Rule.

Anthropologists generally love to disagree with each other- contradicting each other and trying to prove their theory as the correct one is probably as important to them as the in-depth and well researched work they do. But one thing that all anthropologists generally agree on is that every tribe originally comes from somewhere else. The Gypsies of Europe come from the Doms of North India they say, the Tharus of Nepal are from Rajasthan, they say. The meticulous and voluminous research work they present, over-raw the common man into not making any contradictions.

Closer home, some anthropologists also put forward theories of the Lepchas, who most believe are the aboriginals of the valleys and ridges on the Southern and Eastern face of

the mighty Kanchenjunga and the area under its immediate shadow.

Some anthropologists suggest that the Lepchas could have migrated southwards from parts of Mongolia and Tibet pointing to the similarities in the languages spoken by the Lepchas and the certain Dialects used in Indo-China. The Lepchas themselves have no tradition of migration and all records point to the deep inaccessible valleys and ridges at the base of Kanchenjunga to be their place of origin.

Early writers on India have written accounts of their encounter with a strange community who lived in isolation, in perfect harmony with nature and in the remote valleys at the foot of the Himalayas, more specifically the Eastern Himalayas. What set this community apart was the gentleness and mildness of their nature and absolute lack of aggressiveness. The accounts written by these early historians present this tribe as being in perfect sync with nature, living and

eating with whatever nature could provide. But despite no name being given by them to this race of people- a definite hint can be traced to this contact being with the Lepchas. The accounts and stories are too many and too exhaustive to be talked of here for want of space, but one thing all these writings point to is that, this peace loving worshipper of nature were the aboriginals we know now as the Lepchas. There is no denying this. J.D.Hooker, Surgeon Rennie, Ashley Eden, Geoffrey Gorer and dozens of others writers have all clearly depicted it in their researched writings, therefore leaving no room for argument. Lepchas can be accepted, despite the various migration theories, as being the indigenous people of this area.

Like most aboriginal tribes and communities around the world, the Lepchas too have been a victim of colonization. The pygmies of central and western Africa suffered it, the Chopis of Mozambique suffered it, the Zulus of South Africa suffered it, the Apaches, Blackfeet, Chippewa, Sioux and Cherokees of North America suffered it and so did the Aboriginals of Australia. Colonial rulers, in a bid to make land available for their citizens, began with a common lie: the assertion that the land was "empty" or "unclaimed" or "under-utilized". The British colonial rulers in Australia employed the doctrine of "*terra nullius*" meaning "land where nothing exists" the US settlers, to usurp land belonging to the native Americans tribes like the Apaches, Sioux, Cherokees and Yakis spoke of "*vacuum domicilium*" or "empty domicile". The Germans in Namibia enacted policies of "*tabula rasa*" or taking up ownership of land from the natives on the pretext of providing European style of agriculture to maximize production. In the shadow of the third largest mountain of the world, the mighty Kanchenjunga, the English employed a similar tactic- occupying the hill sides and valleys on the pretext that it was devoid of human settlement. They cleared the heavily forested hill sides despite being well

aware that the Lepchas, the aboriginals of the Darjeeling area, were practicing “jhumming” or “shifting cultivation” wherein they cleared a patch of forest land-cultivated it for a few years and moved on to another patch of land... But Tea was very dear to the British, it formed 1/8 of the total revenue, for them to bother about the rights or the sentiments of the indigenous Lepchas. The British preferred the more hardworking, innovative, adoptive and multi-skilled Nepalese settlers over the laid back, fun loving, Nature oriented and simple minded Lepchas, to work in the newly opened Tea Gardens. Workers of Nepalese origin were brought in large numbers from Nepal and settled in the Tea Gardens. Here it wouldn't be improper to say that although the Lepchas were the original inhabitants of the land- the land was actually nurtured, cared and made fit for cultivation by the hard work, toil and better farming methods of these settlers from Nepal, who now are the majority community in the hills of Darjeeling.

The aboriginals soon became a minority on their own land. Mother Darjeeling had now two sons- one which was her own flesh and blood (the Lepchas) and the other was an adopted one (the Nepalese) who cared and nurtured her to make her what she is today. This is not to imply that her own son cared less for her or nurtured her any less, but it was just that the number game was in favour of her adopted son. She soon had four adopted sons to every son of her own. That's what the census suggests. The Lepchas today comprise roughly 20% of the total population of the hills at the present times.

Going back to the Native American or the Aboriginals of Australia or the indigenous tribes of Africa and their displacement by the white settlers.. This displacement of the Aboriginals by the White Settlers resulted in, in most cases, very violent and serious conflicts, which was but expected. Those of us who grew up in the era of Western Comics and also the last years of apartheid movement led by Nelson Mandela in South Africa, are fairly well informed of the conflicts between aboriginals and later day settlers. Luckily the Hills of Darjeeling

and Sikkim the “land of the Lepchas” saw none of this conflict – Lepchas and the later day settlers whether they were Tibetans or Bhutanese or British or settlers from Nepal- they all got along absolutely well- *nebula* (Nepali, Bhutia and Lepchas) in the early part of the 20th Century, would testify to it.

Here again, we go back to the early part of this essay where the mildness and lack of aggressiveness of the Lepchas in general is mentioned. Geoffrey Gorer in his book “Lepchas of Sikkim” has taken some pain in trying to explain this lack of aggressiveness in the Lepcha community, especially in dealing with outsiders. But then, we who know the Lepchas on a day to day basis do not need a Geoffrey Gorer to tell us this – so what then is it that has led the Lepchas to now come out on to the streets and take the extreme step of going on mass indefinite hunger strike???


Community leaders of the Lepchas tell us that this is just the manifestation of the years or rather centuries of neglect and indifference that is now rising to the surface. Of course, officially, they say the hunger strike is against the “politicalization of the LDC (Lepcha Development Council) but the truth lies elsewhere- it is the venting out of the long years of neglect, domination, discrimination and negligence that the Lepchas of Darjeeling Area have long been subjugated to in their own land. The Lepcha Development Council, which the West Bengal State Government, has committed to form, was seen as the first step towards correcting the wrongs the community had undergone since centuries. With the GJMM led GTA opposing the creation of LDC under the Backward Classes Department, a department currently outside the GTA, though on the transfer list, the Rongs felt wronged.

Community leaders point out to the fact that despite the Lepcha Community being 20% of the population, they have not been represented proportionately in the GTA. Only one out of the 45 elected members is a Lepcha and not a single one out of the five nominated members is a Lepcha, they point out. One would be inclined to sympathize with their grievances.

The announcement of the LDC by the State Cabinet sent a feeling of justice finally having arrived at the door steps of the Rongs. But the opposition to the formation of LDC by the GJMM ruled GTA proved the proverbial last straw for the Lepcha Community. They saw this opposition as “politicalization” of their long standing cultural

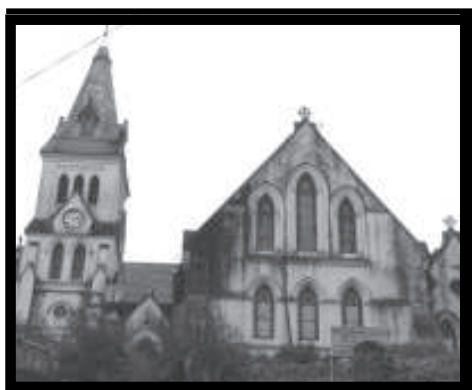
historical and traditional rights. The GJMM, on the other hand, too have a case at hand. The GJMM had expected, and by all pointers, had been assured by the State Government that the LDC would be under the jurisdiction of the newly formed GTA but its formation outside it has been interpreted as a breach of trust by the State Government. The GJMM also views this as a Divide and Rule policy of the Mamta Banerjee led Trinamul Congress Government of West Bengal. The LDC, of course does not have any territorial jurisdiction and the Lepcha leaders hence feel that the demand of the GJMM to retain control over it is unjust and a Political demand. They advocate that if the LDC is put under the jurisdiction of the GTA, Lepchas living outside the territorial boundaries of the GTA, would be deprived of the benefits of the LDC. Though both side have valid reasons to feel the aggrieved party, the fact is that the State Government for the moment is patting itself on the back for having finally caused the GJMM some uncomfortable moments and embarrassments at its own back yard. Their glee though is bound to rebound with severe consequences. The Hills have never been divided on Communal or religious or Class or Caste grounds but this Trinamul Government has managed to do just that- It may have effectively managed to cause the GJMM some discomfort at the moment but what it has done in the long run is to sow the seeds of disharmony in the Hills of Darjeeling.

A temporary truce has been reached with the Lepcha Community calling off their Indefinite Hunger Strike, after receiving assurances that LDC would remain directly under the State Government, but it has left permanent scars which will take generations to heal. Yes the Rongs have been wronged down the ages but the current Trinamul Government have wronged the entire Hill community with its ill thought and ill timed tactic of Divide & Rule.

The Rongs have been wronged all through History but the present Bengal Government has wronged the entire Future of the Darjeeling Hills. 

MISSIONARIES IN THE HILLS

Mr T.T.Lepcha



Though, God took the human form, in the person of Jesus Christ, in the Middle East, it is the men and women of God from across the 'Seven Seas', who made sacrifices to bring the Gospel across the hills and valleys of Sikkim and to open out the windows, for our forefathers, on to the outside world. Much before the coming of Scottish missionaries in the hill areas of Darjeeling, a few others had already been there. 'Nepali Around the World'. The wonderful book written by Dr.Cindy L.Perry, tells us that in 1841 itself, Rev. William start had come to Darjeeling and was determined to start Mission work to reach the people with the Christian Gospel. He along with C.G.Niebel, one of the missionaries in his band, translated certain books of the Holy Bible in Nepali language and Lepcha language.

Though their efforts, which continued for quite some time, do not seem to have made any dent, they paved the way for the works of Eastern Himalayan Mission under the Church of Scotland, initially in the area of Darjeeling District and subsequently in Independent Sikkim. By 1870s, the missionaries from the Church of Scotland, had set their feet in the areas of Darjeeling to start the mission work. As a result, by 1880s Christian congregations in some areas of Darjeeling District had already come up. Ideas to start the work under the Scottish Mission in Independent Sikkim also had already been formed. Records indicate that in 1883, Rev. W.S.Sutherland made a visit to Tumlong, where the residence of the King was situated then, with a view to petition the king and to obtain permission for

a missionary to reside in Sikkim. Though Sutherland did not receive any concrete response, he was optimistic that His Highness would grant a settlement in a few years. After two years Rev.W.Macfarlane started from Kalimpong on 18.11.1885 for Tumlong via Renock-Gangtok. When he reached Tumlong he was told that the ruler was at Chumbi and he returned from Tumlong after leaving a written request for the Ruler. Therein, he made four requests of which two were: (a) for permission to start schools in Sikkim and (b) for grant of an area for the Mission work.

On his way back, via Dikchu, he visited Namthong Sadam, Namchi, Kewzing, Richenpong and Chakung. While the efforts to obtain official permission for a missionary to reside in Sikkim was on, some influence of the Mission works in Darjeeling and Kalimpong was felt in the border areas of Sikkim right from 1880s. It is evident that Rev. Sutherland and Rev. Turnbull made a number of visits to the Southern and Eastern parts of Sikkim, before the two visits to Tumlong stated above. In the year 1880 itself Rev. Sutherland had visited Daramdin. Buddhiman, however, resigned the following year. These visits of the missionaries and exposure of some local men to the Mission works going on in Darjeeling and Kalimpong can be considered the dawn which subsequently brought the first rays of the Gospel in the hills of Sikkim- first in the areas across Tista and then to the inner parts of Sikkim. Apart from the initial work at Fambong, Chakung and Soryong the Mission works in places like Mangmoo (Dentam), Vok, Rhenok, Dikling followed in the second half of 1880s. By the year 1886, the number of Christians in Sikkim was 26, which went upto 39 in 1887. In 1888 the Christian families residing in Sikkim were only seven those of Gombu (Catechist, Fambong); Songmal (peon in school); Asing (teacher in Chakung); Achap, Azang, Yumsing(Vok) all three cultivators and Hlango. The total number of Christians in 1888 were 52

including the family members of seven who were in a Training Institute in Kalimpong. Out of these seven who were in the Institute, Apun and Kartik Singh were teachers and the rest pupils. By the year 1886 schools at Chakung and Soryong had started mainly with the help of Rev. Turnbull stationed at Darjeeling. By the year 1889 schools at Mangmoo, Kitam, Sadam and Namthang were started. Planting of schools at Vok, Rhenock, Rinchenpong, Turuk and Dikling also followed soon thereafter. However, the official permission for missionary to settle in Sikkim is said to be obtained only in 1889.

After receiving the official permission for a missionary to settle in Sikkim, Sutherland the Missionary-in-charge for Sikkim, selected Chidam (Sadam) in South Sikkim for the Mission station. Chidam is right opposite to Darjeeling hills, the distance of a day's journey on foot, with River Rangit flowing in between. Foundation stone of a missionary bungalow was laid at Chidam (Sadam) in the presence of Rev. R.Kilgour, the then in-Charge of Universities' Mission and others and the bungalow was ready for occupation around in 1890. Rev.Kilgour was the first missionary to occupy the bungalow. He in his last letter written from that house told of white fields that were already being harvested. After him, Rev.Macara resided in Chidam bungalow for less than five years from 1893. While a missionary was stationed at Chidam, others headquartered at Kalimpong and Darjeeling made occasional visits to Sikkim to help the Mission works and guide the congregations that had grown in Sikkim.

Entries in the visitor's book of ARI(Aritar, these days) Dakbunglow made in early 1890s indicate that Rev. Mackenzie, Rev.Macara and Rev.Sutherland made trips to the eastern parts of Sikkim too. Infact,



the report prepared by Rev.Macfarlane for the year 1886 states that Mr.Page of the Baptist Mission had made several visits to Sikkim prior to Rev.Macfarlane's visit to Tumlong. However, there is no indication to show that there was any effort to start a Baptist Mission in Sikkim on 23th Nov 1901, Rev.Macara entered the Church (Macfarlane Church at Kalimpong) for the last time as single man and emerged a married one. The gathering wished Godspeed as they went to begin their married life and Rev. Mackean took over his baton. The records show that he started to reside at Chidam around the month of October 1901, till his recall after some years to Kalimpong to attend works there. It seems there was some trouble between the British Government and the Tibetan authorities at that time. On 23.10.1903, he wrote, "these days are days of stir and excitement. Many of our quiet valleys are echoing to the clank of army wagons and the tramp of soldier's feet. Political and military officers are hurrying here and there." Rev.H.C.Duncan, during the absence of Rev. Mackean oversaw the mission works in Sikkim from around August, 1906 to July, 1908. Thereafter Rev.Evan Mackenzie took over from Rev.Duncan, and continued upto April 1910, when Rev.Mackean rejoined to look after the Mission works in Sikkim. Though the Mission was located at Chidam, most of the meetings of the Sikkim congregation, used to be held at Kalimpong. This continued even after Rev. Macken rejoined his duty in 1910, till 6.6.1912, when for the first time the meeting was held at Temi after the Mission centre was shifted to Temi into a ten acres land, given on lease by the Sikkim Durbar. Though the Mission center was shifted to Temi, effort was on to shift it from Chidam to Gangtok. It is seen that an application requesting for the permission to shift the centre to Gangtok had been made to the Political Officer in Sikkim. Detailed accounts of the new works proposed to be undertaken by the mission was sought by the Political officer to enable him to place it before the Sikkim Durbar and obtain the permission of transfer. In compliance Rev.Mackean on

18.9.1901 wrote to the then Political Officer J.C.White describing three main activities in detail, namely, evangelistic works, educational programmes and vocational training in the trades like carpentry. Yet the shifting of the centre till the end was not granted.

By the second half of the 1900s thirteen primary schools and six dispensaries had come up. However, the schools at Pachey and Singtam were closed at the end of 1913. Carpet-weaving training center was also available at Temi. The starting of schools and dispensaries helped the Mission workers to come in contact with the people and to tell them about the Christian Gospel. The local people were pleased to have schools and dispensaries functioning in their villages. While the Government generally did not oppose the establishment of the schools and the dispensaries, records indicate that in the first half of 1910s there was resistance to the continuation of the mission schools from some individuals. The formal permission for the construction of a worship place was not available. The Sunday worships were conducted either in the house meant for the school or in a private house made available for such worships by the Mission worker or a Christian family. With the size of a particular congregation growing the need of a worship place automatically arose resulting into the construction of Church buildings on individuals' lands. Such worship places constructed, in 1917 on the lands offered by individuals at Vok and Fambong attracted letters from authorities seeking clarification as to with whose permission these churches were constructed. The worship place at Vok standing on the land offered by Rev.P.Targain served as Mission School for many years and stands till today as the Vok mother Church.

Rev. Mackean spent altogether 14 years in Sikkim supervising the Mission works and did so under

GORKHALAND & TELANGANA-

By Sandip C. Jain

A BRIEF COMPARATIVE

TELANGANA

BRIEF HISTORY

Telangana was the center of culture, learning, and power in the Deccan and India for centuries. Telangana's long and rich history was shaped by the great empires that have risen and fallen in its area. After the decline of the influential Mauryan Empire, the Satavahana dynasty (230 BCE to 220 CE), the first great Telugu empire, came to be the dominant power in the region. It originated from the lands between the Godavari and Krishna Rivers. Kotilingala in Karimnagar was their first capital, before moving to Dharanikota. Excavations at Kotilingala revealed coinage of Simukha, the first Satavahana emperor. The Satavahana Empire was important in repelling foreign empires from India, such as the Kushans, Sakas and Greeks, thereby preserving Indian culture.

After the decline of the Satavahanas, various dynasties ruled the region such as the Vakatakas, Vishnukundinas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Western Chalukyas.

The region came under the Muslim rule of the Delhi Sultanate in the 14th century, followed by Bahmanis.

Sultan Quli, a governor of Golkonda, revolted against the Bahmani Sultanate and established the Qutb Shahi dynasty in 1518.

On 21 September 1687, the Golkonda Sultanate came under the rule of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb after a year-long siege of the Golkonda fort.

In 1712, Asif Jah I was appointed to be the Viceroy of the Deccan, with the title Nizam-ul-Mulk (Administrator of the Realm). In 1724, Asif Jah I defeated Mubariz Khan to establish autonomy over the Deccan Suba, starting what came to be known as the Asif Jahi dynasty. He named the region Hyderabad Deccan. Subsequent rulers retained the title Nizam ul-Mulk and were referred to as Asif Jahi Nizams, or Nizams of Hyderabad. When Asif Jah I died in 1748, there was political unrest due to contention for the throne among his sons, who were aided by opportunistic neighbouring states and colonial foreign forces. In 1769, Hyderabad city became the formal capital of the Nizams.

Nizam signed Subsidiary alliance in 1799 with British and lost its control over the state's defence and foreign affairs. Hyderabad state became a princely state in British India.

GORKHALAND

Before the 1780s, the area of Darjeeling formed a part of dominions of the Chogyal of Sikkim, who had been engaged in unsuccessful warfare against the Gorkhas of Nepal. From 1780, the Gorkhas made several attempts to capture the entire region of Darjeeling. By the beginning of 19th century, they had overrun Sikkim as far eastward as the Teesta River and had conquered and annexed the Terai.

In the meantime, the British were engaged in preventing the Gorkhas from overrunning the whole of the northern frontier. The Anglo-Gorkha war broke out in 1814, which resulted in the defeat of the Gorkhas and subsequently led to the signing of the Sugauli Treaty in 1815. According to the treaty, Nepal had to cede all those territories which the Gorkhas had annexed from the Chogyal of Sikkim to the British East India Company (i.e. the area between Mechi River and Teesta River).

Later in 1817, through the Treaty of Titalia, the British East India Company reinstated the Chogyal of Sikkim, restored all the tracts of land between the Mechi River and the Teesta river to the Chogyal of Sikkim and guaranteed his sovereignty.

In 1835, the Hills of Darjeeling, including an enclave of 138 square miles (360 km²), was given to the British East India Company by Sikkim, executed with a Deed of Grant. In November 1864, the Treaty of Sinchula was executed, in which the Bengal Dooars, which originally had been under the Cooch Behar State and taken over by Bhutan in the second half of the eighteenth century with the passes leading into the hills of Bhutan and Kalimpong were ceded to the British by Bhutan. Kalimpong as well had been a part of Sikkim and was occupied by Bhutan in 1700; but according to the Treaty of Sinchula it was ceded to British India along with the eleven Bengal Dooars; though seven Assam Dooars had already been taken over by the British in 1942. The present Darjeeling district can be said to have assumed its present shape and size in 1866 with an area of 1234 sq. miles.

Prior to 1861 and from 1870–1874, Darjeeling District was a "Non-Regulated Area" (where acts and regulations of the British Raj did not automatically apply in the district in line with rest of the country, unless specifically extended). From 1862 to 1870, it was considered a "Regulated Area". The term "Non-Regulated Area" was

TELANGANA

From the late nineteenth century on, Hyderabad was transformed into a modern city with the establishment of railways, transport services, underground drainage, running water, electricity, Begumpet Airport, telecommunications, universities and industries..

1,14,840 SQ KM

35,286,757

10

**Hyderabad, Adilabad, Khammam, Karimgunj,
Mahabnagar, Madak, Nalgonga,**

Nizamabad, Rangareddy, Warrangal

119/295

17/42

9/18

58.77%

45.5

10

41.6%

40.54%

1956

61.47%

*** Including Siliguri**

AREA

POPULATION

DISTRICTS

MLA

MP (Lok Sabha)

MP (Rajya Sabha)

Literacy Rate

Infant Mortality

UNIVERSITIES

Percentage of State(Area)

Percentage of State(Population)

Merged with parent state

**Revenue contribution
to Parent State**

GORKHALAND

changed to "Scheduled District" in 1874 and again to "Backward Tracts" in 1919. The status was known as "Partially Excluded Area" from 1935 until the independence of India.

3149 SQ KM

18,42,034*

1*

Darjeeling*

3/294

1/42*

1/16*

79.92%

49

1

2.9%

2.1%

1947

15.2%

cont from page7

difficult working and living conditions. The long period of service in an isolated place, was evidently having adverse effect on the health of his family members. Some years saw famine in Sikkim. The year 1919 was one of them. Rev.Mackean wrote "Last year rice at its lowest was 16 seers for the rupees and there was plenty of it. This year it is 31/2 seers and there are no sellers". He attended the Panchayat meeting of Sikkim congregation for the last time on 13.1.1921 before he left Sikkim in the beginning of the year 1921. He firmly believed that a medical man would be best suited to be his successor. However no medical man came to replace him.

After the departure of Rev.Mackean, Rev Laxman Sing Mukhia helped Sikkim congregation from the beginning of the year 1921 to the beginning of the year 1925 followed by Rec.K.S.Peters for one year till the ordination of Prachin P.Targain in the beginning of 1926. Rev Targain served for a short period after ordination and Rev. Graham helped the Christian congregation thereafter for about one year till Rev.C.T.Pazo was ordained on 22.2.1928 at Macfarlane Church, Kalimpong. After the departure of Rev.Mackean there was no resident foreign missionary in Sikkim till 5.4.1923, when Hon'ble Miss Mary Scott entered Sikkim with an initial permit of six month's stay. Her coming and taking up the mission works in Sikkim is the most important watershed in the history of Christianity in Sikkim. Though the mission centre had to stay at Temi, Miss Scott was allowed to reside at Gangtok, She stayed in two places before she shifted to the rented house, Mazong Kothi which she turned into a multipurpose house including a place for Sunday worships. As soon as she entered into Sikkim she involved herself fully in the mission work and invariably attended almost all the Bari Panchayats. She also helped to intensify the activities in the schools and in the dispensaries. She found in Rev.C.T.Pazo a great co-worker. Miss



Scott had the quality to identify herself with the local people and their culture and also developed a cordial relationship with the Durbar. This helped her to petition the Durbar directly on many occasions in matters related to the Mission works.

The hard works including strenuous journey through difficult terrain was having ill effect on her health. Often her touring which she found 'most interesting and on many occasion also amusing', was restricted on medical ground. In October 1929, she wrote to Col.Weir the then Political Officer in Sikkim, "I am advised not to live at higher than 6000ft and not to travel higher than 6500ft. So alas! A hope for run into Thibet some days for fun must fade from my daydreams'. During such periods a missionary stationed at Kalimpong on her request was allowed to pay occasional visits to Sikkim,' subject to the missionary, seeking a passport for every trip to cross the inner line and enter into Sikkim'. Records show Rev. G.S.Mill and Rev. R.Knox having assisted her in this way in the years when she was advised to take rest on medical ground.

During her occasional furloughs, missionaries (Dr. Graham and Rev.W.Mackenzie) stationed at Kalimpong oversaw the Mission works in Sikkim through correspondence and occasional visits. When she was restrained from carrying out strenuous work, she felt the need for an additional missionary to accompany and help her. She reasoned that the agreement was, as long as she resided in Gangtok, no other missionary could reside in Gangtok, but the agreement did not limit the number of missionaries. The number of Europeans at the time of Rev.Mackean was three and she hoped that His Highness would grant her permission to have a permanent colleague as her helper. In 1933, she made correspondence with Mr. Williamson the then Political Officer in Sikkim to find out the possibility of getting Miss Macclachan a permit to reside in Sikkim, who already used to receive an annual frontier pass from the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling for

medical work and this enabled her to respond to calls from Namche, Rungpoo and Miss Scott. However there is no record to indicate that Miss Macclachan received the permit to stay in Sikkim.

The need for the helping hand was persisting and on her request made through B. J. Gould, the then Political Officer in Sikkim, the Sikkim Durbar agreed to the transfer of the permit of occasional visits to Sikkim granted to Rev. G.S. Mill in favour of Rev. Gavin Fairservice on 8/11/1938. In the meantime, on further application Rev. Fairservice was issued a pass on 24/10/1939 permitting him and his wife to settle in Sikkim for an initial period of six months to be renewed every six months.

The travel within Sikkim from one place to another was on foot. The tracks were as usual small and uneven. In the words of Rev.Mackean, 'the roads are of somewhat the same nature as the Irish snakes, It is extremely difficult to find them, and even more difficult to keep them'. However, the missionary found that the beauty of rare flora and fauna and joy to meet little companies of Christians compensated the traveler for the day's arduous journey. The Dak Bungalows, almost all of which are existing even now, are located at different points of the routes at such intervals that the distance between the two successive Dak Bungalows is a day's travel on foot. Permission allowing a missionary traveller to halt in these Dak Bungalows overnight was indicated in the residential permit itself. The rent for the first one night was free but occupancy from the second day entailed payment of rent. Such Dak Bungalow passes issued to a missionary could be transferred to his successors. Some of the tracks that were used by the travelers gradually improved to mule tracks. Even the bridge across Tista on the Siliguri-Gangtok via Tista and Rangpo (only car road in Sikkim and on which small vehicles only could ply). The load of the vehicle along the route was restricted. The travel from Darjeeling was usually taken through Mahjitar where again a cane bridge helped the traveler to cross. ■

Jhahkry and Jhahkrism (Jhahkrivad) are abstractly found almost in every ethnic group in different places of the globe in various expressions and names though its essence is the same. The place of Holy-spirit and evil-spirit (spirits), and deities is the central acceptance of the subject, which have been culturally developed with the human civilization. The worship of natural forces, deities and belief on spirits are alive from time immemorial though some have given to it the name of superstition and mysticism but the story does not end here. Today, science and technology have reached its zenith and as a consequence we are also living with uncountable complexities in almost all the subjects and fields of human life. Thus, in this time of free trade and globalization the existence of such personality like the Jhahkry and the practices of Jhahkrism in the Nepali community of Darjeeling, may be a provocative research subject for many people like students, scholars, researchers and intellectuals. There are so many questions related to the subject Jhahkry which needs intense field (action) research and studies. Some of the commonly asked questions are: Who are the Jhahkries? Are they born or made? Can we call the knowledge of Jhahkry a Jhahkrism? How does a person becomes a Jhahkry? Do they have real healing power and how do we perceive that? Why do people believe in them? What is the importance of Jhahkry in the Nepalese society? What are the minimum supposed requirements to be a Jhahkry? And etc. These questions are inter-related to each other. At the very outset, we must be able to understand the nature and subject matter of Jhahkry and without presuppositions of the role of spirit, we cannot reach other parts to the maximum exploration on the subject. This small paper is

JHAHKRY IN DARJEELING

By Eagam Khaling



mainly written with an objective of drawing the attention of scholars, researchers, students, writers and intellectuals about Jhahkrism which still exists and the so called Jhahkry who are the active member of the hill society. They are deeply associated with our folk-culture. Thus, the study of cultural identity and literature of Nepalese and cultural relations among the hill communities cannot solely ignore the Jhahkry and Jhahkrism, as hill people are naturally and culturally easy believers in spirits (evil and holy-spirits) and worship natural forces and deities.

'Jhahkry' according to the "**Nepali Brihat Sabda Kosh**" (Nepali Pajkeeya Pragma Prathisthan Publication) is a healer who heals a sick person by chanting Tantra-mantra and another "**Nepali-Nepali-English Dictionary**" also defines in the same way that a 'Jhahkry' means 'Dhahmee', a person who chants Tantra-mantra, in Nepali, and 'Wizard' in English (Here, I have taken the word 'Jhahkry' for the translation 'Jhahkree' for the convenience of non-Nepalese readers). This word 'Wizard' is not wholly acceptable, because this word has a different meaning in Nepali. 'Jhahkry' or 'Dhahmee' (Phedangba, Mangpa, Nokso, Bon and etc.)

comfortably can be exchanged with the word 'Witch-doctor'. According to Longman Active Dictionary of English this word 'Witch-doctor' means a person in an undeveloped society who is believed to have magical powers. In the case of hill people this magical power indicatively seems to mean a

healing power. These dictionary meanings are however comprehensive workable but not complete in itself. But generally and practically by the word 'Jhahkry' we understand the person of our society who helps and heals people in their sickness (problems) which is commonly believed to be caused by some spirits and etc. and the person who does a 'Chinta' (a performative worship) by beating his 'Dhol-dhyangro' (traditional drums especially used by Jhahkry) to bring

the deviated soul of a dead person to the right path or sometime to help the pupil Jhahkry (i.e. newborn immature Jhahkry) or to heal a sick person and such an extra personality who foresees the causes of problems of a person on beads of rice and diagnose the kinds of sickness that may be caused either by spirits or the problem is medical. This method of diagnoses in the sense of Jhahkrism is called 'Jokhana' which also means guessing.

In the Hills we can find sufficient number of people who consider Jhahkry's Jokhana as a superstitions but they cannot deny the existence of Jhahkry, because they are before our eyes, with us and active member of our society and inseparably related to our culture. They are invited to perform and conduct worship in traditional worship gatherings, deities' worship, and ancestors' worship and even in some general worship (Puja). In this sense, Jhahkry has an active social involvement in the society and they are

not isolated from the contents of Nepalese culture. If we do further field research in the village, countryside and even in the municipal areas or anywhere in the Darjeeling Hills we will definitely find these people so called Jhahkry and often the people (believers) queuing in Jhahkry's house and private temples seeking his/her help and if we happen to ask them then they would tell us that they have come to do '**Ke-Ke**' (a name given to healing ritual performed by a Jhahkry) or to hear '**Jokhana**' the word '**Ke-Ke**' cannot be exactly translated into English in its pure meaning and essence but in general '**Ke-Ke**' means '**What-what**' or unknown force or anything that works upon the mind and body of a person consequently causing some problems. The sickness or problems caused by such unknown forces means work of unnameable. Here, this creates a hole for a question of superstitions because anything unknown, indefinite and imperceptible are always exist in questions but as I have already written that we cannot solely deny the existence of Jhahkry.

When the spirit (according to individual religion, dharma, tradition, race, culture and beliefs) or the spirit of an ancestor chooses the particular body and soul to reside within and remains with a person till it desires to reside. The stay of spirit (the Deva) depends on the Jhahkry's devotions, according to some Jhahkry's interviews. This spirit is the hidden power, which makes a Jhahkry able to utter '**Jokhana**' then do '**Ke-Ke**' (healing). This spirit is also called **Atma, Dev, Kul-Devata** and etc. When this spirit enters into a person's soul and body he/she begins to do many unusual things like crying, shouting, screaming, murmuring, chanting and trembling, which are commonly believed to be the birth symptoms of a Jhahkry. Birth age of Jhahkry is not fixed but generally not possible in old age. There have been some Jhahkries who are believed to be have started trembling ever since being in their mother's womb. If Jhahkries are not born but made then there could have been many institutions and schools opened by now and we too could joined them and chosen to live as Jhahkries. But this is not possible at all and also this does not depend on our preference and interest. It depends on the spirit's preference and choice. Once it chooses a person he/she has to abide by the



spirits directions till he/she becomes a complete Jhahkry otherwise he/she suffers a lot. At this stage a person has to find a matching and mature guru (teacher-jhahkry) for learning the necessary knowledge, methods, Tantra-mantras related to Jhahkrism. Thus, a guru declares a Jhahkry to a complete Jhahkry when he/she attained sufficient knowledge from his/her guru and passes certain tests (given by the guru). Jhahkrism though may produce superstitions and mystery but its existence in our prevailing Nepalese society and cultural importance cannot be denied. Since human beings are still unable to completely understand the universe and human life and many are still upto a theory. We human beings are incomplete in knowledge though we have gained much with the passage of years and centuries. The subject of Jhahkrism is related with our culture, day to day living and with myth, folk-culture and belief, and a Jhahkry can be considered today as an important person in the Nepali society in the hill. A Jhahkry's main objective is spiritually heal or help the people in the society. His/Her devotion towards hidden power the spirit (Atma, Kul-Devta and Devi-Devatas) and belief expresses the existence of spirits (all spirits) and most importantly manifesting the immortality of the soul and presupposition of the absolute God.

At the beginning, Jhahkrism has to be taken that it is not a pure science subject; although our methods of study and perspective may be scientific. It is a socio-cultural and anthropological based subject and metaphysical in nature. It has been spiritually related to the reality, historically with the development of socio-cultural construction. The word '**Jhahkrism**' is quite obscure because epistemologically Jhahkry-knowledge is not solely transferable to every person, that is, due to the place of spirit and extra mental intuition (i.e. epistemological and linguistic approaches are to be avoided). If anything is '**ism**' in itself then it must be solely transferable to every person, and its instances and contents must be explicit to every person's understanding. This is one limitation that it gains the noun of mysticism and beliefs as human superstitions.

The Jhahkry culture is also found in many Nepalese sub-casts (where Jhahkry is also called by some other names like **Mangpa, Nokso, Bon, Dhamee, Phedangba** and **Bijuva**, etc.) and among them **kirati culture** is also one. Some scholars are of the opinions that Kirati language is also a branch of Sanskrit language, which in course of time could not develop into a proper language and as a result we do not find any concrete literature in this language. There is also a problem with the history of Jhahkry. We do not know the exact origin of Jhahkrism. Some have tagged it with mythological the God '**Shiva**' and some with '**Sukracharya**' the guru of '**Danavas**'. The myth Jhahkrism has come together with human existence and civilization, and till today it is with us in the hill community of Darjeeling. This is inseparably related to our culture, social lives and ways of life.

Despite the cultural attachment, Jhahkrismy relies on our spiritual beliefs. What is spiritual is also psychologically provocative. But, belief is not impersonal and cannot be universal and always objectively valid. Many Jhahkries believe that whatever they say in '**Jokhana**' is said by their spirit the **Dev**, which is capable of knowing many things. They are believed to be past, present and future because they bear such powers. There are so many people who deny believing on '**Jokhana**' and consider it just nonsense and are against the law of life creating such nonsensical superstitions and illusions. ■

GTA HAS PRESIDENTIAL ASSENT – AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION SIMPLY A FORMALITY.

By Hillman- the Analyst

Sub: GTA has Presidential assent – Amendment of the Constitution simply a formality.

Apropos the article in The Indian Express News Service, raising the question about the necessity of a constitutional amendment for the GTA Act informing the High Court by the Centre. The news column expresses the constitutional aspects of the GTA Act within the Constitution to be sanctioned as an amendment of the Constitution. This it is perceived, the Parliament will proceed in due time.

Although the news has been interpreted by various sources according to their own understanding of the issue vis-à-vis GTA Act requiring amendment of the Constitution, it is no doubt true, however, the crux of the matter which requires to be transparently interpreted, is the understanding of how and why the GTA was conceived out of the constitutional “box”. Surely the GTA was not a hat-trick with a magical wand, and that the Centre well conceived its creation taking into account all considerations of Darjeeling District hill people who have always been safeguarded and protected since its very birth in 1867.

Once again, retelling the political history of Darjeeling District and its people, have always been treated by a moderation of safeguard under various nomenclatures practically since its establishment as an administrative unit, initially referred as backward areas which was later termed Backward Tracts (1870) for laying out a different administrative structure than that applied to the Centre and the Provincial governments.

In order to redefine these Backward Tracts, it was further considered to protect these areas from external influence by more advanced members of the society at large. Accordingly, these areas were restricted entry for outsiders under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873 (Line system known as the Inner Line Permit). Incidentally, this Inner Line Permit (ILP) was applicable to entire North Bengal including Darjeeling District till 1990. It might however be recorded, that the permit in question here (ILP) which had been withdrawn had been referred to as Restricted Area Permit (RAP). The difference between the ILP and RAP requires to be differentiated in context to the specific areas applied. To the best of knowledge, the ILP is a general mandatory entry permit required for

outsiders/foreign nationals to enter entire North Bengal Districts. In the early years of its inception the ILP was applied to the entire Province of Assam out of which territory six new States (Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur) emerged under the constitutional provisions of the Sixth Schedule (almost all Excluded Areas except Meghalaya a Partially Excluded Area). The ILP was applicable to all these states wherein a few the ILP was relaxed/withdrawn. At present, to the best of knowledge, ILP is prevalent in Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and not (?) in Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura and Assam, this can be verified anytime.

The above matter has been enlarged in order to contrast ILP with RAP, which in the best of knowledge is known to identify restricted areas within the bounds of ILP area. To differentiate the two permit systems entirely, the case of Kalimpong subdivision in Darjeeling District may be an example in view. The ILP was issued by the Foreign Office/Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India specifically for visiting North Bengal Districts. Whereas the RAP was an additional permit issued by the Superintendent of Police (DIB), Darjeeling District and the visit limited to only 48 hrs for all foreign nationals.

Considering this issue, it is a pointer, during the ILP and RAP regime till the system was withdrawn in 1990, the office where all the foreigners were registered in Kalimpong was known as the Frontier Office and the designated officer-in-charge was titled as the Frontier Inspector (FI). Interesting to note, now this official post is also designated combined as Foreign Additional Office. An explanation requires to be found in the change in nomenclature and designation in this regard, and which it is considered of most important in understanding the administration of Darjeeling as a Partially Excluded Area (PEA).

In the same spirit of PEA is also the concern in the change of nomenclature in respect of the designation Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Darjeeling District as District Magistrate (DM), or reference to the DC/DM is another far reaching event of consequence in terms of administrative reform program. It is a contention of many that this metaphorical change seems to have occurred around 1986 (?). If at all this time period is factual, it is concerning to note a landmark incident during this period was the martyrdom martial clash of 27 July 1986 between the public and the administration buttressed by the State Armed Police. This is not to allude any relation at all between the change in designation of the pivotal post DC/DM to the 27 July incident, but to infer and enquire and lay at rest all questions relating to the metamorphosis of DC to DM. If at all this implication holds water, someone must explain how the transformation has occurred without the knowledge for which the post of DC is the outcome of the Chief Commissionership of Province/State is delegated to the DM of the State Collectorate. A thorough enquiry in this regard in explanation of the

perceived transformation would satisfy in completing the future history of Darjeeling District as a PEA.

Symbolically speaking the connection of the withdrawal of (1) the Inner Line Permit/Restricted Area Permit, (2) change in the designation of Frontier Inspector/to FI cum Foreign Additional Office and (3) reference to the District Commissioner as District Magistrate seems interrelated than a coincident. If the former is the case, then it is felt the administration require to come out transparently clear to explain the relation and its end program considering Darjeeling District is a Partially Excluded Area (and its safeguard measures defined in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution).

Darjeeling District, quite unknown to the general public at large has already been provided safety within the Fifth Schedule by the President of India when the first Parliament came into effect in 1952 implying Darjeeling District (the people as tribes) were safeguarded by the Fifth Schedule provision Part B Rule 4. Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) “(1) consisting of not more than twenty members of whom, as nearly as may be, three fourths shall be the representatives of the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of the State ... filled by other members of those tribes”.

“(2) It shall be the duty of the Tribes Advisory Council to advise on such matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes in the State as may be referred to them by the Governor”.

These are in fact, constitutional programs (guaranteeing safeguard) for the people within the defined areas of Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas (E&PEA). These areas considered outside the administrative purview of the Centre and the Provinces (later States after 1947) being territories directly under the charge of the Governor General 1857/Viceroy 1858. These areas were Non-Regulated (that is not regulated within the administrative reforms programs under the Regulation Act of 1773). In general understanding, the Non-Regulated areas (E&PEA) were treated as if, outside British India although these territories were absorbed within certain Provinces/States which were delegated to administer (of course differently) on behalf of the Governor General/Viceroy till 1950 and thereafter under the President 1950-52 (first elected Parliament).

This brief summary outlines the political history of Darjeeling District since its inception in 1867 as an administrative unit of the territories ceded by Sikkim (1835,1850,1861) and Bhutan(1864/65) to East India Company and the British Crown respectively. At the time of independence the Crown transferred these territories to the Governor General/Viceroy (1947-50) which then passed on to the President of India 1952 on commencement of the first Parliament. Thereafter it became the sole duty of the President to streamline a program for these E&PEA within the framework of the Constitution considered guaranteed within the provisions of the Fifth and Sixth Schedules. These two Schedules formed the two most important aspects of the twelve Schedules of the Constitution which laid the foundation for a process of assimilation and integration of the Scheduled Areas into the Union of India in identifying themselves as new union states. Therefore it cannot be denied, that the Fifth and Sixth Schedules were the exit out and in of the Scheduled Areas as a constitutional guarantee in creating a new state which, is in fact a perception of integration into the Federation of the Union of India.

With an overview understanding of the above deliberations, it is recognisable that only the President of India (Article 3) "introduced in either House of Parliament except on the recommendation of the President ... the Bill affects the area, boundaries or name of any of the States ... referred by the President to the Legislature of that State for expressing its view ... and the period so specified or allowed has expired". This amply indicates the paramount position of the President as the sole authority in charge of the Scheduled Areas in recommending their future constitutional programs on a daily basis as well as their ultimate destination, which here is seen to mean a Union State.

Reverting back to the original theme under contention and misinterpretations at various levels of civil as well as political spectrum, that is, the relevance of the GTA Act and program as a constitutional interim setup before completing its constitutional journey to its inevitable end – statehood (subject only to the precedential allocation of Scheduled Area). In other words, the GTA Sabha is a constitutional provision expressed by the President of India which only requires ratification by the Parliament as a constitutional amendment Bill under Article 368 (amendment of the Constitution). In the Fifth Schedule Part D, 7.(2) it is clearly instructed, "No such law

as is mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph shall be deemed to be an amendment of this Constitution for the purposes of article 368". This clearly determines Parliament recognises the authority of the President of India in regard to this Schedule, and hence is duty bound to place a Bill for an amendment of the Constitution as a simple Bill not requiring any majority qualification decision, but, only sanction the recognition of the Presidential order in ratification in completing the administrative reforms formality and officialdom.


It is therefore a naivety to consider that the High Court at Calcutta has delivered an adverse decision on the GTA Act and considered the validity of the writ petition as fait accompli. This is untrue, as the due process of the legal interpretation is still incomplete for final adjudication. However, one may note from the ending words of Justice Dipankar Dutta questions in regard to the GTA Act "a vacuum would be created" if the GTA is scrapped. In legal language he is unable to scrap the GTA (which is now not only created but functioning as a living body) as an incarnation of the DGHC which is perceived as dead and buried, constitutionally speaking.

In conclusion, it is a reminder to the reader that the Calcutta High Court has made no decision at all. On the contrary, the Centre has replied appropriately to the High Court that it has not denied the fact a constitutional amendment will soon be placed in Parliament (simply as a matter for ratification only and not for permission which is a totally different matter). In other words, there is hurry at all to ratify the GTA, except for official recognition as a matter of formality, which has no bounds in time. It is therefore insignificant in considering the hurry why certain parties are interested for the amendment which is only a program down line. The question arises therefore do the petitioners' have any direct vested interest in scudding the statehood program by instilling GTA to continue for a longer span of time vis-a-vis the State of West Bengal. This however indirectly contravenes prolonging the aspects of Darjeeling District (including the Dooars) being determined as a Scheduled Area. This however is unrecognizable, as the Scheduled Area process will bide its own time in ensuring its purpose which no power on earth can undertake upsetting its end program. It is therefore a wise course if all those opposing the GTA infact reverse their program and support the GTA as a Presidential decree, flouting which is an unconstitutional event.

A glaring aspect in the High Court proceedings is the fact that one of the three petitioners has challenged the GTA on a moot point which may require a consideration. The content of this particular petition is that the GTA Act, "did not honour the sentiment and demands of other ethnic communities in the area except the Gorkhas". Perceptually this is a valid ground, as a statehood demand is primarily based on the indigenous peoples right to self determination without which primary factor no states can be imagined as per international understanding which is binding on every country around the globe. This happens to be the assertion of the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

2007 which India too has signed along with 143 countries. Coincidentally it maybe remarked, Bangladesh and Bhutan is not a signatory to this landmark Declaration. Bhutan and Bangladesh has refrained from signing with the specific intention of sidelining, in the former case the issue of Bhutanese Nepali nationals and in the latter the Chakma tribes of the Chittagong Hill Tracts respectively. Both in Bhutan and Bangladesh the respective issues have reached a point of no return wherein the Bhutanese Nepali and the Chakma tribes are now considered refugees under international recognition. On account of which the UNO have undertaken programs in reviewing these depressed populations for rehabilitation and settlement in foreign countries after airlifting them to their accorded destinations. The Bhutanese Nepali refugees have been airlifted to the USA and the Chakma tribes to Arunachal Pradesh in India.

Is it therefore probable that, one of the petitioners challenging the GTA Act is alluding to the fact, that, the indigenous people and the Scheduled Tribes are somehow marginalized in the entire process. This is a genuine appeal and it has been well recognized while formulating the GTA Act although this is unrecognizable in content, but in fact it happens to be the main quotient qualifying the GTA Act. This factor is somehow invisible in document and form, in reality it is unconvincing, but the matter of the fact is, that both DGHC and GTA are the incarnations of the Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) addressed by the Fifth Schedule. In other words, needless to mention, both the DGHC and GTA happens to be tribal bodies. As a result of which there are no reservations for Scheduled Tribes which is a statutory implication in every constitutional bodies, institutions, etc. However, this deficient of the invisibility should become transparently opaque when the Census 2011 is finally published wherein many of the hill communities are reckoned to be listed as Scheduled Tribes (Article 242). This obviously should trigger the final lap to the ribbon at the end of the race wherein Darjeeling District (the adjoining Dooars) can constitutionally demand a State subject to becoming a Scheduled Area. The final analysis is the word Gorkha will be subsumed by Scheduled Tribes or conversely Gorkhaland could be a virtual reality.

It is visualized the State for Darjeeling District (and the Dooars?) will simultaneously be raised along with Telangana - which too qualifies for statehood, probably for another reason than the constitutional aspects of Darjeeling 

GLAM

Glamour not just in looks.....

HT Bureau

The word “GLAM” is a fancy short form version of the word glamour. But for Miss Vishnu Chettri it spells a new dimension, her own world in her new store GLAM which promises to make the tiny town of Kalimpong better in terms of interior designing. Vishnu a 26 years old woman has done her schooling from St. Philomena’s, Kalimpong and Interior Designing course from Kolkata. She claims to have always been interested in interior designing from a very tender age. Beautifully decorated homes always enchanted her and there was no turning away, thus she decided to indulge in her passion and we see it in full flight at her brand new store GLAM. She says “proper planning, estimation, rationalization and experience are essential”. There we have it. Women and their wisdom!!! Always the careful thinker and a better planner.

Initially it was a trend for the women of the hills to go to the metropolitan cities and get a job at call centers or beauty parlours and so on and so forth. Many have even ventured to go abroad in search of jobs. At the end of the day employment is important after all. Not just the women but even the men have always felt that there aren’t many job opportunities here in the hills. In a way it is true. Thus the migration to the bigger cities. But when there is a will there is a way!! Time seems to be changing, and in the context of women of the hills they are staying back in their own land to serve their own people. Young women like Vishnu Chettri have taken risks that many would abstain from in fear of failure. But what is life without risk!!! Why should women always live a life of insecurity!!! Why should marriage be the only source of security for a woman!!! Women need to break free from the shackles that they have built link by link on their own. Vishnu Chettri is that figure of a woman who has stood her ground and has proved that a woman can make her dreams come true. She gives credit to her family especially her sister for whom she claims to derive moral strength




from. Well if there is a woman behind every man’s success there seems to be a woman behind every woman’s success.

Kalimpong is developing and it’s high time we run along with it. Everything is increasing right from the prices to the number of girls admitted in schools. Everything is multiplying, right from the garbage to the number of vehicles. It’s the 21st century after all. Love letters have been replaced by SMSes. Even handmade teas have been replaced by machine made teas. Water has been replaced by Gatorade. Even the Relli river has been replaced by swimming pools. Life is really moving fast. And women need to move accordingly lest they get left behind. And if we compare the number of working women ten years back, the figure seems to have almost doubled. Today we have more female Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Politicians and Businesswomen than what we had ten years back. This clearly depicts the rising status of the women in the social and economic society here in the hills.

And this development of the fairer sex does seem to have had impact upon the fresh new generation women of today. Women may not have publicly taken off their bras and burnt them in the open but yes they have burnt their chains in their own minds. More and more women are venturing to do things that were supposedly reserved only for men. Women have now entered the competition

in this maze of economic development along with men. They even own their own cars these days and drive everywhere themselves without having to plead their husbands or anyone to pick them or drop them. No chaperone is now required. Women now in the hills have the freedom of social mobility compared to what it was ten years ago.

Such progress of women in the hills is a moral boost for the next generation to come. The more the women develop the better the society. It is crucial for every society to allow women to be at par with men. Then only there can be a balance, just like the Asian theory of yin and yang. One will always be incomplete without the other. 

DID YOU KNOW?????

Actress Vivien Leigh was born Vivian Mary Hartley in Darjeeling, India. From the age of six to 15 she was educated in an English convent school in Darjeeling, where she showed aptitude for the performing arts; then her education was polished off in an European finishing schools. She is best known for her work in the film *Gone with the Wind*.



INTERESTING SNIPPETS

- * Chewing gum while culling onions can help a person stop tears. Try it next time you chop onions!!!
- * If offered a new pen to write with, 97% of all people will write their own name.
- * It snowed in the Sahara Desert in February of 1979.
- * Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing.
- * Cats, camels and giraffes are the only animals in the world that walk rightfoot, rightfoot, leftfoot, leftfoot, rather than right foot, leftfoot...
- * Leonardo da Vinci could write with one hand and draw with the other simultaneously. Now we know why his pictures were exquisite!!
- * The only 15 letters word that can be spelled without repeating a letter is uncopyrightable.
- * No word in the English Language rhymes with month, orange, silver and purple.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



We climbed the wrong peak.. This one is called the G.T.A



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NEAR TO EXTINCT MEDICINAL PLANTS OF DARJEELING HILLS PROTECT FOR FUTURE

Dr. Dhiman Mukherjee*, Dr. Soumendra Chakraborty and Mr. Sibdas Baskey

Medicinal plants are an important source of raw material for traditional medicines and a large number of people derive employment and income from the collection, processing and trade of these plants. With the sharp rise in popularity of traditional medicine, the economic importance of these plants has increased enormously. With the enormous population pressure and sharp increase in population in Darjeeling hill and its adjoining part for last 20 year, local endangered and high value medicinal plant are extinct from forest area. The role of medicinal plants is particularly important in the Darjeeling Himalayan region. These areas are richly endowed with a large variety of plant species, many of which have medicinal properties. A large proportion of the rural population in these areas depends on locally available medicinal plants to meet their health care requirements. Furthermore, the collection and marketing of these plants provide an important source of income for communities living in the mountain areas. Unfortunately, the increase in demand has also increased the threat of depletion, as many of these plants are largely collected from the wild. A majority of medicinal plants are collected from the wild. With the large increase in domestic and international demand, there has been a sharp increase in collection. This has put extreme pressure on wild resources, and many species face threat

We have visited many parts of this zone, particularly from Phalut, Sandakphu to Lava region of Darjeeling hills. What we observed was that many important plant species, which were quite abundantly found few years back, are now endangered or near extinction. Keeping our observation of last five year, here we are enlisting few plant of this zone, for which care is must, as a future valuable resource.

BERBERIS ARISTATA

Family: Berberidaceae,

Common name: Daru haldi

Plant parts used: Root

Medicinal properties/ Uses :

Antipyretic, Antiperiodic, Diaphoretic, Tonic

Cultivated : Wild - Wild

Extent of availability: Not Endangered

Red Data Book: Not Listed

CINCHONA LEDGERIANA

Common name -: Quinine

Family: Rubiaceae

Plant part used: Bark

Medicinal properties :

Bitter in test and use as stimulates the appetite,
Reduces fever, Antispasmodic, Antimalarial,
Astringent, Tonic, Antibacterial

Cultivated or wild: Cultivated

Extent of availability: not endangered

Red data book: not listed

DACTYLORHIZA

HATAGIREA

Family: Orchidaceae

Common name: Salam Panja

Plant parts used - Bulbous roots

Medicinal Properties /Uses :

General Tonic, Aphrodisiac

Cultivated or not-cultivated (Trials)

Extent of availability - Endangered

Red Data Book - Listed

Distribution: Distributed in the alpine
regions of the
Himalayas at altitudes
between 2500-3500 mt.

GLORIOSA SUPERBA

Family: Liliaceae

Common name: Kalihari

Plant parts used: Seeds, Leaves

Medicinal properties /Uses :

Athelmintic for cattle, Tonic,
Promotion of labour
pain

Cultivated: Wild- Wild

Extent of availability : Not Endangered

Red Data Book: Not Listed

PIPER LONGUM

Family: Piperaceae

Common name Pipli

Plant parts used : Flower

Medicinal properties / Uses :

Stimulant, Carminative, Tonic, Cough,
For preparation of Astakatarva taila

Cultivated: Wild-Wild

Extent of availability : Endangered

Red Data Book: Listed

PLANTAGO OVATA

Family: Plantaginaceae

Common name: Isabgol

Plant parts used: Leaves

Medicinal properties /Uses :

Catarrh, Gonorrhea, Blenorrhoea,
Dysentery and diarrhoea, Infection of
kidney , Cough and cold

Cultivated : Wild: Cultivated

Extent of availability: Not Endangered

Red Data Book: Not listed

PODOPHYLLUM HEXENDRUM

Family: Podophyllaceae

Common name: Bankakri

Plant parts used: Rhizome, Root.

Medicinal Properties / Uses :

Cure for tumors, Purative, Skin
disease, Bitter tonic,
Emetic.

Cultivated / Wild: Wild

Extent of availability: Endangered

Red Data Book: Listed

SAUSSUREA COSTUS

Family: Asteraceae

Common name: kuth

Plant parts used: Root

Medicinal properties /Uses :

Antispasmodic, Cholera, Aphrodisiac,
Dyspepsia, Bronchodilator,
Antiseptic, Jaundice, Skin, Leprosy,
Bronchial asthma, Tonic

Cultivated: Wild -cultivated

Extent of availability -: Endangered

Red Data Book: Listed

Distribution:

In moist slopes of the Darjeeling hill a altitudes
between 8000 to 12000 ft.

SWERTIA CHIRATA

Family: Gentianaceae

Common name: Chirayata

Plant parts used: whole plant

Medicinal properties / Uses :

Chronic fever, malaria, Jaundice, Anthelmintic
, de-worming, Bronchial asthma, cold, cough,
Biliousness, Diabetes, urinary disorder,
Gastritis, gastric ulcer, Inflammation, Burning
sensation, Leucorrhoea, Blood purification,
Eye strain

Cultivated: Wild - Wild

Extent of availability : Endangered

Red Data Book : Listed

TAXUS WALLICHIANA

Family: Pinaceae

Common name: Himalayan Yew

Plant parts used: Bark, leaves

Medicinal properties /Uses :

Taxol extracted from the leaves and bark is
used to treat breast and uterine cancer, In
Ayurveda and Tibetan medicine it is used to
treat fever and muscular pain.

Cultivated or not : cultivated

Extent of availability: Endangered

Red Data Book: Listed

TINOSPORA CORDIFOLIA

Family: Menispermaceae

Common name:

Gurjar Gudchi Plant


parts used:

Stem, Root

Medicinal properties/ Uses : Bitter
stomach ache, Diuretic, Stimulates
bile secretion, Skin disease, Tonic,
Diabetes, Fever, Antidote, Vomiting

Cultivated: Wild

Red Data Book: Not listed

We should protect the above enlisted
plant species for our future
generation, because their population
is diminishing day by day and if this
continues then after few year these
plant will be only with us in
photographs. So early and necessary
attention and awareness amongst all
corner of society particularly
intellectuals, scientist, farmer and
local people, to protect above plant
and show our love towards
Darjeeling hills. 

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Painting the town red is no joke! And the one who gets the privilege to is no joke either. And the “one” that I’m talking about is none other than our own SDO Mr Lakpa N Sherpa. Ah yes, we know him, after all he is the Sashi Kapoor look alike of our Kalimpong town. That is but no surprise as we have seen him romping about Kalimpong always dressed so smartly you could mistake him for a movie star, of course he always has his aviator sunglasses on and regarding this we also know that he looks better than what Salman Khan did in Dabaang. As a matter of fact his role as the SDO is no less than what salman khan had as Inspector Chulbul Pandey, that is to correct things and apply law and order with justice and of course while remaining within the limit of law and order himself unlike Chulbul Pandey.

Mr. Sherpa joined his post as the SDO of Kalimpong almost two years back in January 2011. Mr Sherpa has a house in Salugarah and is married to a lovely lady, Keela Bhutia and is a father to a cherubic boy of 7. Born in August 31st 1971 at Darjeeling Mr. Sherpa had a normal childhood. Having his father in the British army, he got the opportunity of spending his early childhood in Brunei. He spent happy baby boy days there as it did feel like home because he was surrounded by nepali families and nepali school mates. He was never a troublesome boy. He always put trouble at an arm’s length. Always in discipline and always a little shy. The most memorable time he remembers of his life abroad is having many friends to play with which is very important at that stage for the healthy development of a boy or a girl.

After having spent a few number of years there in Brunei and completing class 4 , his family shifted back to Darjeeling where he joined Vidya Vikash Academy, and then later St Josephs College for further studies, and again later Darjeeling government college in which he pursued Economic(hons) . Mr. Sherpa as a student was never at the top of the class, but he always worked hard. He would always revise his lessons each day without fail, therefore when exams would come he never had to burn the midnight oil. Even during exams he would study the exact number of hours

PAINTING THE TOWN RED

LAKPA N SHERPA

By Prakriti Prabha Chettri



that he always spent on a normal school day. It is but no surprise because even today as a man of 41 he is always well prepared. It is quite obvious that Mr. Sherpa understood the value of time at a very early age and maybe that is why he never had to struggle with anything as such. Life sailed smoothly because Mr. Sherpa knew how to steer his ship. That is how he got through his childhood and later adolescence. But Mr. Sherpa kind of regrets the fact that he was just too shy to be more active in sports and extracurricular activities while he was a student. But there is no denying that he has been more than required active as a devoted government officer. He has always been supportive and encouraging regarding the development of the concerned regions that he had been posted to .

As a young man seeking his fortune, Mr. Sherpa was blessed very early and he acquired his first job as a co-operative inspector in 1993 for which he worked for just two months as he had passed his Staff Service Selection Exams in that course of time and joined the Staff Service as a Custom Officer. He worked as a Custom Officer for only nine months because as hardworking as he was he had again cleared his West Bengal Civil Service exams and had acquired the post of a BDO. Yet again in that course of time he had also passed and had been qualified as a CBI Officer at Delhi, but then he chose not to join the service there at Delhi due to the fact that it was too far away from home. Mr. Sherpa acquired all this through his own hard work. He would read all the latest news and watch daily news and happenings on TV too. He would go through all the papers and magazines available to him. So

the foundation of his success solely lay in his hard work.

There was no turning back for Mr. Sherpa after he joined his post on 1st September 1995. From a Block Development Officer to the Sub Divisional Officer it has been an exciting journey for him. He has the opportunity of exploring various districts all over West Bengal and has had the privilege of bringing much required change. He was posted in Kalimpong a year back and has made a difference even if it is hosting the tea tourism fest to the beautification of Kalimpong town with those potted green dwarf fir trees on both sides of the main road. We also owe it to him that the republic day celebrations were for the first time held on the Main Road of Kalimpong. It was an event to remember and is etched into the history of Kalimpong. Mr Sherpa sees Kalimpong with a lot of potential for the growth of Tourism. He seems to have seen Kalimpong to its core and encourages people to be aware of the influx of development that tourism can bring to Kalimpong. He suggests that Kalimpong should utilize its potential to the maximum and that the government should help build a new future for Kalimpong and its coming generation. He says that it grieves him to see the youth of the hills moving out to the cities or even Siliguri and working as sales boys and girls. He wants the government to set up various vocational courses so the local youth can avail of the facility. Mr. Sherpa completely believes that if tourism is encouraged and supported by the government in ten years to come the youth of Kalimpong will not have to move out seeking other job opportunities. He believes that if the roads can be smoothed and electricity and water supplied Kalimpong can be the greatest tourist hub as he himself has been awed by the lovely location of Sillery Busty , Charkhol, Lolaygoan, Reshi and so on. He states the “human resource and capacity building” are the keys that will unlock a new and bright future for Kalimpong.

And as Mr. Sherpa knows that it’s time to say goodbye to Kalimpong soon as he will be posted to a new location in March, he cannot help but feel sad at leaving such a beautiful town and hopes that when he comes back again to see it more clean and more developed. ■

Kalimpong Sixties !

You might recall the streets of Kalimpong

when we could walk,

when we could talk,

**and laze away our moments waiting for the
papers**

at Himalayan Store .

Repeated rounds of Main Road,

‘half glass’ tea at Dipali and Narayan Das,

Were just excuses to prolong the hope

of saying a shy Hi to someone special !

**Our dreams were housed in Kanchan and
Novelty**

The ‘coming’ posters of great hit movies

**Were glimpses of the big world across the
Teesta bridge !**

Listener’s Choice and Binaca Hit Parade

**Brought all ears closer to whining and
whistling radios**

While Gopal and Om studios

Paint brushed likeness to the owner’s liking !

**Guitar strings from Premalaya produced
music notes**

Of Beatles, Carpenters, and Tom Jones

that still break our old scarred hearts !

“Baishaki ban ma..” and “Nau laakhey taara”

**Stirred new emotions within us, our very own
emotions !**

Dharma Hall indeed showed us our roots !

**And who can explain the mad, chaotic
happiness**

**That Pandrah August, brought to young and
old !**

**The great bell of Macfarlane Church has come
down from its lofty perch**

**To keep on ringing in many hearts of different
faiths !**

**Kira Kanchha, Hum Jaayega, seem so much
taller**

**now that the laughter they evoked, is heard no
more ..**

And Relli, dear old Relli

your memories flows much farther

than the Teesta- Rangit you embrace !

My dear Kalimpong !

You have outlived Graham, Sutherland,

And Tibet trade

**And great souls have happily breathed their
last in your lap !**

While I grow old and take my final rest

Continue your endless journey of time,

Hand in hand with Kanchenjunga! 

TAGORE & GRAHAM AT “HOME” TOGETHER...

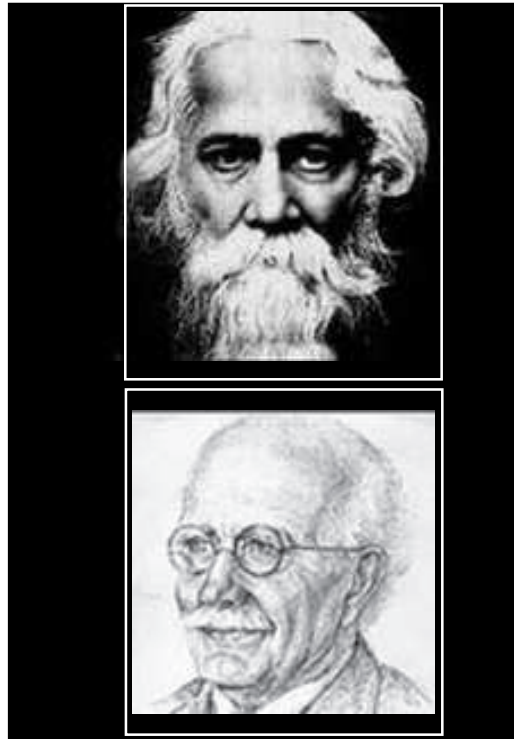
By Sandip C. Jain

In its roughly 150 years of existence as a civil society, Kalimpong can proudly boast of its association with some of the biggest names in modern history- Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, The Roerichs, the royal families of Afghanistan, Burma, Bhutan and Nepal, the Dalai Lama, Rev McFarlane, Younghusband and many more such luminaries but definitely its association with Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. J.A.Graham will be counted as its most cherished and memorable ones.

Gurudev's association with Kalimpong is a special one. By making the first Live Radio Broadcast in India from Kalimpong, Kalimpong's name has been engraved in the history of Telecommunication and Broadcasting in India. He broadcasted his poem "Janmadin" live over All India Radio from Kalimpong and this fact will live on forever but this is something which is well documented and well known to all lovers of this beautiful little town. Dr. Graham on the other hand, can without much hesitation, be credited to be the "Father of Kalimpong" for all the work that he and his associates have done for Kalimpong to make it the place it is today. His tireless and ceaseless efforts laid the foundation for modern Kalimpong. But these efforts and contributions of his too are well described in each and every history book on this town and region.

What is not well known despite being a matter of much interest and high historical value is the close relation that these two great men of history shared. One came from an aristocratic Bengali family, who is acknowledged as one of the greatest poet, writer, artist, philosopher and thinker of all times and whose contribution towards the Independence struggle of India can never be forgotten. The other was a missionary who came into India under the patronage of those very colonial forces who enslaved India. One was a staunch Hindu, the other a devoted Christian but the bond, mutual respect and friendship, the two shared was something worth being made into a fine example.

It probably is no coincidence that both these two illustrious men were born in the same year (1861) and died too within a year of each other (1941 & 1942). Though



from entirely different cultures, religions, upbringings, countries and societies, the two shared remarkably close views on most of the issues and aspects of life. Since Gurudev was a frequent visitor of Kalimpong, the two have many opportunities to interact with each other and had lengthy discussions on culture, art, music, religion, philosophy, politics as well as the Independence of India. In fact, despite being closely associated with the then British rulers of India, Dr. Graham was favourably inclined towards a free India as his broadcast in Wellington suggests wherein he advocated that "India and Britain should be co-partners", which implies he wanted some kind of political freedom to be given to India. It appears that many of Rev. Graham's views regarding the political situation prevailing at that time were coloured by Gurudev and his writings too gave reflection to this fact.

Their main contact was in the year 1938, a few years prior to both their deaths. Tagore was in Kalimpong recuperating after a serious illness. It was during this period that he made the now famous broadcast over All India Radio on his 77th Birthday. During his stay in Kalimpong, Gurudev was visited by Dr. Graham frequently and they spent long hours sitting on the lawn of Gauripur house, discussing mutual interests. Though it cannot be positively confirmed but it is believed

that Dr. Graham was present within the premises of Gauripur house at the moment Gurudev was addressing the Nation over AIR on the occasion of his birthday. It is also believed that during the period Gurudev was sick and recovering in Kalimpong, Dr. Graham made sure that the noble laureate was constantly attended by doctors of the Kalimpong hospital. In the same year, Dr. Graham too fell seriously ill and Rabindranath Tagore showed the same concerns that Dr. Graham had showered on him during his own sickness.

In the year 1941, Tagore fell seriously ill, again in Kalimpong, and had to be rushed to Calcutta for his treatment- this time too Dr. Graham was at hand to arrange things and rush him proper medical care. Later in the year when Gurudev died, Dr. Graham paid glowing tribute to him not only as a poet but also as a musician, preacher, politician and educationist. Paying tribute to Tagore, Dr. Graham wrote thus, "...for him India is not merely the motherland of Nationalists; she represents great spiritual principal, viz. the fundamental human unity of the diverse people who, whether as original inhabitants, immigrants or conquerors, have made their home on her soil. Above all freedom for India was for Tagore the freedom of her common people from oppression and injustice, foreign or native.....". "He hated the cowardice of the weak as much as he hated the arrogance of the strong, but he was always on the side of the weak against the strong.....".

Dr. Graham knew the Gitanjali well and often quoted from it. The two were, not just contemporary in age but also in tune with their thinking and philosophy and had much in common- Shantineketan was for Dr. Graham an ideal temple of learning and often wrote about it in his writings. It is believed that when Tagore brought a piece of land in Kalimpong- it was Dr. Graham who suggested that the house to be built on it could be a replica of Tagore's house in Shantineketan. The house "Chitrabhanu" situated at Atisha Road of Kalimpong is a close copy of Tagore's residence at Shantineketan which is called "Shyamali."

Dr. Graham and Gurudev were two completely different people and of different backgrounds but the common meeting grounds of Kalimpong made them friends whose special relation is still being talked about seventy years after their deaths...



THE COOKING DIARIES

By Prakriti Prabha Chettri

When the sun sets in Kalimpong, the aroma of *pokoras* and *aluchops* suddenly filter through the air. Everyone is seen scurrying to their homes. The day has come to an end, yet again. And the sky is coloured like a deep blue ocean. And dusk makes everything seem mysteriously nostalgic. And I instead of heading home have my feet directed to a brand new restaurant in town. As I walked in the dark wallpapers added to the mystery of the evening. "Vertigo", located at Rishi Road between strawberry and Kachan Cinema Hall did make my heart and head spin together.

I was immediately awed by the sparkling spotlessness. The tables set in perfect diamond shapes, the roses adorning the pretty little white vases on it, the shining cutlery laid on napkins in perfect chord and a chair pulled out delicately for you as if you were a queen elevates you and makes you smile in glory at every perfect detail. Owned by the duo, Diwaker and shiavats, both of whom returned from the "cities" tired of the hectic monotonous life and chose to come back and start afresh in their beloved town Kalimpong. There was no stopping them when they both put their young heads together and came with this perfect idea of having a perfect restaurant in the heart of the town. Thus "vertigo" came into being.

Therefore I came to be a special part of this idea of "vertigo" when Shaivats and Diwaker invited me for dinner to explore what they had to offer from their wide range of palate. After being seated comfortably, I was first served with what they call the *Eight Treasure Soup* which had of course eight treasures or ingredients namely chicken, eggs, mushrooms, spring onions, carrots, cabbages, beans and coriander. The flavours were so fresh and so well blended that it took the word "soup" to a whole new level.

For starters there was *Crispy Chilly Potatoes* and *Jiang's Style Chicken*. The crispy potatoes were deep fried potatoes smothered in chilly sauce and garlic, while the *Jiang's style chicken* were shredded and roasted chicken with pepper and soy sauce. Both were beautiful to look at and delicious to taste. What I loved about the starters was that despite the deep fries and roasts, it wasn't heavy at all. It kept me wanting for more. And of course, appetizers best go with warm talk and Diwaker and Shaivats had a lot to share along with such lovely food.

I was then served the first main course which was vegetarian to the core. *Potato and Baby Corn Shanghai Style*. I've always loved baby corn. Even



the word "baby corn" sounds so sweet. This dish was packed with surprises. It not only had just baby corn and potatoes but had the most suspicious flavor of celery and a faint flavor of ground roasted peanuts blended appropriately with a little sweetness, a little sourness and a little spiciness. And what was perfect about the dish was that the baby corn was as tender as it could be and the sauce was sharp without being acidic. This is always something that I watch out for whenever I eat Chinese food. Too salty or acidic dishes are just such a turn off. I was served *olive and green peas fried rice* with it. Honestly I had never had olives before and had never thought or imagined that I would get the opportunity of tasting olives at a Chinese restaurant so I guess there was a tiny surprise packed in every meal. I have to admit here that it was one of the best fried rice I had ever had. Despite the word fried added to the rice which makes it seem very oily but the best fried rice are perfect when they don't look fried at all. The rice was gorgeously white with peas so green and olives adding a mysterious dark green colour to it. When a dish looks so beautiful it is bound to taste good.

And it was lovely. The taste was so delicate without any ingredients overpowering the other, the peas were perfect, firm but cooked and the olives were magical. It was one of the dishes that I had to put it on the list of my most favorites. Well let's get the bottom line "it was one of the best fried rice I had ever had."

But that's not the end.. I was then served the non vegetarian course which comprised of *fish Szechwan Chilli Sauce* and *Tsinghoi Rice and Noodles*. Just like how I've always loved baby corn, I've also always loved fish and like I said there was a surprise in every meal, fish substituting chicken was a surprise too. The fish was cooked beautifully and Szechwan or "timbur" added a nice fresh purring taste to it. And the rice and noodles were oil less and very, very light. It may seem surprising at the capacity of my stomach but honestly each item was so light and so refreshing that I still had space for more.

Then came the dessert. I've always confessed that I don't have that sweet a tooth so when I was served brownie with ice cream I wasn't that excited as such. But but but but... one spoon of brownie and icecream in my mouth and boy..... the pipping hot brownie and the super cold ice cream created a melody in my mouth with surpassed all the fire works of the diwali in the entire Kalimpong put together. Trust me!! if you are from Kalimpong and if you don't go to "vertigo" for the brownie with icecream you are missing an addiction of a life time. It is a must.. a must .. A MUST.... I give Vertigo full brownie points!!!! The entire brownie points available just for that beautiful dessert.

Well I have to say here that by the time I had wolfed down my brownie with ice cream I was completely full.. (ahhh finally). A perfect end to a perfect dinner.) Also, by that time the evening had come to an end and it was completely dark.. So it was time to say goodbye. With the taste of hot chocolate with the confusing chill of the ice cream in my mouth, I left for home, happy and content.

Till my next invite. Bon appetite. 🍴



Dr. Sonam B. Wangyel

RECALLING KALIMPONG

Yes, it's never too late to write an old story that has hardly been told. Like all hill stations in India Darjeeling is also renowned for excellent schooling facilities. The elegant 'English medium schools' with their rich future-secured children have their own niche in the long story of Darjeeling but so do also the less affluent schools catering to the less privileged native students. Schools like SUMI (Kalimpong), St. Alphonsus' (Kurseong), St. Robert's (Darjeeling), Nepali Girls' High School (Darjeeling and Kalimpong) and numerous similar schools have produced alumni that many of the financially better endowed institutes would envy.

However, in the early stages many of these schools suffered numerous teething problems but the pioneers that ventured into the mountains to establish these institutions were invariably men made of sterner stuff and they prevailed. The first officially recognized school for the natives, Bhutia Boarding School, commenced in 1874 followed by the Government Middle English School in 1860. The two were amalgamated to form the High English School, later named Government High School.[1] The Bhutia Boarding School, meant for the Bhutias and Lepchas, had a difficult commencement not for the lack of funding or enthusiasm but for sheer lack of students. Some of the Kazis (landed aristocrats of high rank) of Sikkim were persuaded to send their children but still the school was short on enrollment. The situation being such the authorities had to literary hunt for students. Finally, even adults were admitted to the primary section and one can picture a primary section with an assortment of children liberally interspersed with adults. These primary section adults, mustache and beard adorned, were naturally a difficult lot to control. Truancy amongst these men was very common and it has been recorded that it was "impossible to prevent the Lepcha boys from running away." When confronted by the masters these adult primary section students had a useful excuse against which the masters could do or say little: they claimed that they had gone to meet their wives!

I can still recall the late Mr. Tenzing Wangdi, former Minister of State in West Bengal, talking about his school days in the same school in the 1920s. The Bhutia boys who took Tibetan as a vernacular subject were always severely marked by their Tibetan master. This very much affected their rankings in the class because the Hindi and Nepali language teachers were more generous. One day, the boys mustered enough courage to tell him that they were suffering poor positions in the class because the master was too much of a perfectionist. The Tibetan master became disheartened to know that he was responsible for making his pupils not achieve the positions they deserved. It was not just present pupils but those whom he had taught in the earlier years, had suffered his measly marks. The Tibetan master decided to make amends. His repentant action saw the boys in the next examination receiving much better marks and he was so keen redress his mistake that he over did it with several boys scoring 110%. ■



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